tapol
British Campaign for the Defence of Political Prisoners and Human Rights in Indonesia

TL 2215

MEMO

Dear Luisa,

17 April, 1985

Number of signatures received so far

UK	33	Ireland	14	Holland	20
Norway	1	Portugal	1	Denmark	29
New Zealand	3				

Time is getting very short, if we are to keep our deadline to issue the Declaration by end May. West German signatures have been delayed because Greens MP have just rotated and the new ones have to be approached, while the Social Democrats hve not yet made up their minds. No word at all yet from France or Sweden. Japanese MPs are just about to be approached. No signatures yet from Australia is also worrying, though the letters to Canberra were sent much later than the rest.

Any chances of more Portuguese signatures?

Thatcher's Visit to Indonesia

East Timor did become an issue in the press, as you will see from the clippings. Her pronouncements were a disgrace and have been dealt with in Lord Avebury's letter to The Times (not yet published), TAPOL's Press Release and my letter published in The Guardian. Labour Leader, Neil Kinnock wrote to Thatcher (see enclosed) though nothing on this appeared in the press.The chances of keeping the issue alive in Parliament are quite good, as it is clear Indonesia will figure more prominently in UK foreign relations.

ICRC Activities in East Timor

Following Thatcher's statement about "access", I checked with the ICRC in Geneva. Things have marginally improved. They now have permission to make regular visits to prisons in Jakarta and E Timor, and the first in this series was due to commence in Cipinang on 15 April. They have also been given permission to send assessment teams to various parts of E Timor to decide whether a relief programme needs to be resumed. This is not yet an agreement to resume operations. The ICRC would prefer these first possible steps towards resumed relief operations not to be publicised, for obvious reasons.

Fretilin Prisoners in Jakarta

An important new development is the work of solidarity now being done by contacts in Jakarta to spread information about Fretilin prisoners in Java. In addition to the list of 42 (see Bulletin No 68), they are now sending out information about the individual prisoners. The first is Dominggas da Costa inTangerang Women's Prison. We have a photo of her with her daughter, and will send you a copy as soon as prints have been made. Some brief notes about her:

Born 2 August 1958 in Dili, she became a Fretilin activist while still at school, working among women, keeping supplies going and so on. When troops occupied Dili, she left with her entire family and joined the resistance. She remained in the bush till 1980 when she was able to return to Dili, to carry out clandestine work behind enemy lines. She worked as a census official for a few months at a camat office, then got a job as a teacher at No 12 Elementary School. Military intelligence penetrated the illegal network in 1982, when she and many others were arrested. She was arrested on 2 September 1982, remained in Comarca, and was tried in January 1984, On 17 May, she was transferred to Tangerang with her daughter, Luisa Maria Pires. Recently, Luisa was returned to

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Dili, to be taken care of by Dominggas' family.

Carrascalao on Why the Timorese Need Protection

I enclose extracts from a particularly revolting interview of Mario Carrascalao, giving a new rationale for lack of access to East Timor.

TAPOL Supplements on East Timor

I sent you each ten copies. There are several hundred more awaiting your orders. Perhaps you should consider having a quantity ready for when the Parliamentary Declaration is issued.

I hope you find this method of firing off Memos useful, and look forward to getting some feedback.

Carmel

Translation (abridged)

Interview with the Governor of East Timor:

IF ACCESS WERE FREE, THE INHABITANTS OF EAST TIMOR WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE

Jakarta, Kompas, 20 March, 1985

The present difficulties for entering East Timor have not have not been imposed for security reasons but rather for the protection of the local population until such time as they have achieved educational equality with the populations of other provinces.

In an interview with Kompas at the East Timor Mission office in Jakarta last week, the Governor of East Timor, Ir Mario Viegas Carrascalao said that the security situation can now be said to be stable. "If this province were opened up to free access for people from other provinces, the people of East Timor would have no chance of getting any work at all, because of their low level of education inherited from nearly 450 years of colonial rule. Based on the regulations currently in force, the most they could hope for would be to become domestic servants," he explained.

He said some exemptions to conditions (for employment) have been introduced to make it possible for local inhabitants to be appointed as civil servants, along with provisions to bring the ranks of ex-colonial officials into conformity with the system now in force. The government is also giving pensions to those who have completed their years of service. Some men and women who have been appointed as civil servants have been given the chance to get a deeper knowledge of government affairs and have been sent to other provinces to attand courses.

He said most camats (sub-district chiefs) had had only elementary or lower secondary school education.... He also said about a thousand civil servants are illoterate, who have been appointed because of their services to the state. "What else can we do? The younger ones can be sent off to school, but all the older ones can do is to wait till they are pensioned."

.....

As a result of the war, he said, there are about 20,000 orphans in East Timor, 11,000 abandoned children and 8,000 cripples. There are a number of orphanages and homes to look after these people but no-one to run these places. "It's not a question of money. We have the funds. But who is there to run them?"

Security no longer represents an obstacle to development. People outside East Timor talk more about the war than we do. Over there, we never feel that a war is going on. "Quite honestly, I feel safer in Dili than in Jakarta." But he didn't deny there were guerrilla remnants who often come down to the villages looking for food. And if these armed bands meet groups of soldiers guarding the villages, a skirmish is not unlikely....

To prevent logistic support going to families still in the mountains, the government evacuated inhabitants, especially from the districts of Viqueque and Ainaro, to Atauro Island. At first there were 4,200 and they mixed with the local population of 5,000, he said. The temporary evacuation was also intended to prevent intrigue and slander from some people eyeing other people's land or other possessions.... The (Indonesian) policy also takes account of the difficulties faced by the population. They can be killed by the gangs if they refuse to give them what they want. If they do give them what they want, they can be punished by law. "These are the reasons for their temporary evacuation... At the latest by the end of the year, the island (of Atauro) will be emptied of evacuees, he said.

On transmigration, he said that intially there were 50 families from Bali in Maliana. They were brought in as model farmers. This year, 750 more families from Bali and Java will go to East Timor. They have been settled in the southern region which is peaceful and fertile, and are given suitable facilities. "I'm sure they will soon proper there," he said.

From Lord Avebury

1985 April 12

Sir,

Everyone will agree with the hope expressed in your editorial Far East Sentiment (The Times April 9), that the Prime Minister would say to her Indonesian hosts that "the people of East Timor deserve the opportunity to determine their own future in accordance with their own political aspirations, unaffected by pressures of one kind or another".

Unfortunately, Mrs Thatcher is quoted as having expressed the opposite opinion, that the disposition of the territory is a matter for Portugal and Indonesia to solve.

The most recent resolution of the UN General Assembly on East Timor was adopted in November 1982, when the Secretary General was instructed "to initiate consultations with all the parties directly concerned, with a view to exploring avenues for achieving a comprehensive settlement of the problem".

Obviously, the people of East Timor collectively are not just one of "the parties directly concerned", but the one most concerned of all. There can be no comprehensive settlement, arising from the UN sponsored negotiations, unless the principles of Resolution 1514 (XV), passed by the General Assembly on 14 December 1960, are observed, and in particular, that armed action and repressive measures against colonial peoples should be terminated, and that those peoples should possess the right to determine their own political future.

If our own government adhere to the declaration of 1960, and if they support the United Nations Charter, which prohibits the acquisition of territory by armed force, they should also recognise that it is only by the concerted action of the international community as a whole that civilised rules of conduct between states and peoples can be enforced. The enslavement of subject peoples cannot be disposed of by shuffling off responsibility onto the aggressors themselves, and onto the former colonial power which may be only too anxious to close a chapter of past history.

Such an ignoble role would ill accord with Britain's record of championing the cause of the oppressed. It would be even more despicable if we are jettisoning the great principles which guided us in the past, for the sake of a sordid trade in arms with military despots like those who govern Indonesia today.

Yours faithfully,

Avebury

The Editor,
The Times.
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